

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9982

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAEST

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ELTN, MILI, BU, TU, GR, YU, RO, GW

SUBJECT: MORE ON THE ZHIVKOV-DEMIREL MEETING

REF: A) ANKARA 5520 (NOTAL); B) SOFIA 1476 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: TURKISH AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED RECENT ZHIVKOV-DEMIREL MEETING AS CONCENTRATING ON ECONOMIC RATHER THAN POLITICAL MATTERS. ALTHOUGH TRIP STIMULATED BY BULGARIANS TO COUNTERBALANCE CARAMANLIS VISIT TO SOFIA, ECONOMIC CONCERNS CENTER ON TRAFFIC BOTTLENECK AT THE BULGARIAN-TURKISH BORDER AND THE INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM SITUATION IS CAUSING FOR BULGARIA. END SUMMARY.

2. TURKISH AMBASSADOR DINC, WHO HAS ONLY NOW RETURNED AFTER ABSENCE IN CONNECTION WITH THE JULY 20 ZHIVKOV-DEMIREL MEETING, HAS SHED FURTHER LIGHT ON WHAT WAS DISCUSSED AND WHAT WAS AGREED, AND ON BACKGROUND AND SEQUELS OF THAT MEETING.

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3. ASIDE FROM WISHING TO RIGHT THE BALANCE, WHICH HAD BECOME SOMEWHAT LOPSIDED IN FAVOR OF GREECE AFTER THE CARAMANLIS VISIT TO SOFIA, ZHIVKOV HAD ONE MAJOR CONCERN -- TO GET THE TURKS TO WORK ON BOTTLENECKS SLOWING

TRANSIT TRAFFIC FROM BULGARIA INTO TURKEY DESTINED TO THE "PETRODOLLAR COUNTRIES", NOTABLE IRAN AND IRAQ. HE OBTAINED AGREEMENT THAT AT THE BORDER CROSSING POINT INTO TURKEY THERE WOULD HENCEFORTH BE SEPARATE ROADS AND BORDER STATIONS FOR TRUCKS AND FOR PASSENGER VEHICLES. (BULGARIANS, HE SAID, HAVE ALREADY BEGUN CONSTRUCTION OF SECOND ROAD SEGMENT.) A WORKING PARTY IS TO BE CONSTITUTED TO EXPLORE MEANS OF EXPEDITING BOTH TRUCK AND RAIL TRAFFIC FROM BULGARIA BY SPEEDING BORDER FORMALITIES (LARGELY THROUGH INCREASED CAPACITY OF STATIONS) AND ESPECIALLY BY EXPANDING CAPACITY OF ROADS AND RAILBEDS.

ACTIVATION OF THE LONG-PENDING JOINT ECONOMIC COUNCIL, OF WHICH THE WORKING PARTY MENTIONED ABOVE WILL IN EFFECT BE A SUBCOMMITTEE, WAS ALSO THE RESULT OF BULGARIAN PRESSURE, DINC SAID. IN DISCUSSING BETTER COMMUNICATIONS, TURKS HINTED TO ZHIVKOV PARTY THAT THEY MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN A PROJECT ANALOGOUS TO THAT WHICH BULGARIANS HAVE CARRIED OUT WITH YUGOSLAVIA, WHEREBY ACCESS HIGHWAY TO BORDER (IN EFFECT A FOUR-LANE SUPER-HIGHWAY) ON BULGARIAN SIDE WAS BUILT AT BULGARIAN EXPENSE, AND CORRESPONDING SEGMENT ON YUGOSLAV SIDE (PIROT-DIMITROVGRAD) FINANCED PARTLY BY YUGOSLAVS AND LARGELY BY BULGARIANS. BULGARIANS DID NOT REACT TO THIS IDEA, BUT THEY IN TURN ARE KNOWN TO BE UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM CEMA PARTNERS, NOTABLY GDR AND ROMANIA, AS WELL AS FROM FRG, TO DO SOMETHING TO EXPEDITE TRANSIT TRAFFIC THROUGH BULGARIA TO PETRODOLLAR COUNTRIES; AND SINCE HEAVY TRUCKING IS ALSO A SIGNIFICANT HARD-CURRENCY EARNER FOR BULGARIA, TURKS ARE HOPEFUL BULGARIA WILL PARTICIPATE FINANCIALLY IN EXPANSION OF TURKISH TRAFFIC HANDLING CAPACITY IN BORDER AREA.

5. THE BOTTLENECK AT THE TURKISH BORDER HAD GOTTEN SO BAD, DINC SAID, THAT SOMETIME PRIOR TO THE ZHIVKOV-DEMIREL MEETING HE WAS SUMMONED BY MINISTER OF TRANSLIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PORTATION TSANOV WHO SAID HE WOULD BE "FIRED WITHIN ONE WEEK" IF NOTHING WAS DONE TO EXPEDITE TRAFFIC. TSANOV REVEALED THAT THE PROBLEM WAS TROUBLING BULGARIA'S RELATIONS WITH SOME OF ITS CEMA PARTNERS, NOTABLY THE ROMANIANS WHO HAD CLAIMED THAT BULGARIA WAS GIVING PREFERENCE TO ITS OWN EXPORTS TO PETRODOLLAR COUNTRIES AT EXPENSE OF DELAYS FOR ROMANIAN EXPORTS. (FRG AMBASSADOR HAS FOR SOME TIME COMPLAINED THAT GERMAN EXPORTS BY TRUCK AND RAIL TO IRAN AND OTHER ME COUNTRIES WERE SUFFERING COSTLY DELAYS IN BULGARIA; AND DINC HAS REFERRED TO CONTINUOUS AND GROWING BACKLOG OF SEVERAL THOUSAND FREIGHT CARS FROM EE COUNTRIES FOR TRANSIT EASTWARD THAT CANNOT EVEN BE ACCEPTED INTO

BULGARIA BECAUSE OF LIMITED CAPACITY OF TURKISH RAILWAYS.)

6. TECHNICALLY, DINC SAID, ZHIVKOV CAME TO TURKEY IN RESPONSE TO AN INVITATION SOMETIME AGO BY TURKISH CHIEF OF STATE; AND HE WAS THUS ABLE TO CLOSE MEETING WITH DEMIREL (WHOM HE HAD MET ON TWO PREVIOUS OCCASIONS) BY REMARKING THAT IT WAS NOW BULGARIA'S TURN TO HOST TURKISH PRESIDENT.

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7. JOINING OF ELECTRIC POWER GRIDS, WHICH WAS THE OSTENSIBLE OCCASION FOR THE MEETING (ORIGINALLY IT WAS TO HAVE BEEN CEREMONY FOR TWO MINISTERS OF ELECTRIC POWER), DINC SAID, INVOLVED ALSO AN AGREEMENT TO EXCHANGE ELECTRIC CURRENT WHICH WILL BE VERY BENEFICIAL TO TURKEY. LATTER IS TO RECEIVE SUPPLEMENTS OF POWER ESPECIALLY DURING PEAK PERIODS IN SUMMER, WHEN ITS OWN CAPACITY IS STRAINED, AND WILL BE ABLE TO REPAY DURING CERTAIN PERIODS OF WINTER AND DURING NIGHT WHEN THERE IS EXCESS CAPACITY; AND ACCOUNTS NEED NOT BE IN BALANCE FOR A PERIOD SOMEWHAT LONGER THAN ONE YEAR. TURKS CAN ALSO MAKE "SPOT PURCHASES" OF POWER FOR CASH TO MEET REQUIREMENTS ADDITIONAL TO THOSE COVERED BY AGREEMENT. THERE WERE ALSO DISCUSSIONS OF JOINT VENTURES IN TURKEY, WITH BULGARIANS PROVIDING CAPITAL AND KNOW-HOW -- THE REVERSE OF THE "INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION" ARRANGEMENTS BULGARIA IS SEEKING WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES.

TURKS ARE WARY ABOUT SUCH DEALS WHERE THEY INVOLVE
NATURAL RESOURCES, DISNC SAID, BUT MIGHT ACCEPT SOME
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IN FOOD PRODUCTION.

8. DINC, WHO WAS NOT PRESENT DURING THE PRIVATE TALK
BETWEEN ZHIVKOV AND DEMIREL AND GOT ONLY GENERALIZED
PLAYBACK, IS NOT SURE WHAT FORM ZHIVKOV'S ASSURANCES
ABOUT EVEN-HANDEDNESS BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY TOOK.
HE HIMSELF HAD NEVER ASKED FOR A BULGARIAN FOREIGN
MINISTRY BRIEFING ON THE CARAMANLIS VISIT BUT WAS
CALLED IN AT BULGARIAN INITIATIVE AFTER HE HAD SHOWN
INTEREST IN ONE SENTENCE OF A TIMES (LONDON) DISPATCH
JUST AFTER THAT MEETING WHICH HAD CLAIMED THAT BUL-
GARIANS GAVE ASSURANCES TO THE GREEKS THAT THEY COULD
MOVE TROOPS FROM THE BULGARIAN TO THE TURKISH BORDER
WITHOUT FEAR THAT BULGARIA WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE. THE
BULGARIANS WENT TO GREAT PAINS TO ASSURE TURKS THAT THAT
STORY WAS DEVOID OF ANY FOUNDATION AND THAT NO MILITARY
MATTERS OF ANY KIND HAD BEEN DISCUSSED OR EVEN MENTIONED
DURING CARAMANLIS VISIT. AT A MINIMUM, DINC SAID,
ZHIVKOV ASSURED DEMIREL THAT BULGARIA'S POLICY IS TO
PLAY NO FAVORITIES AMONG ITS NEIGHBORS AND SEEKS EQUALLY
GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL OF THEM.

9. IN TERMS OF APPEARANCES, HOWEVER, DINC AGREED,
THERE WAS A GREAT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WAY THE
BULGARIANS PRESENTED THE ZHIVKOV-CARAMANLIS ENCOUNTER,
AS AN EVENT OF ALMOST CBEMIC IMPORTANCE, AND THERE
ZHIVKOV-DEMIREL MEETING WHICH RECEIVED LITTLE MEDIA
ATTENTION HERE.
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